



Adult Obesity

Prevalence of Adult Obesity

- Currently 55% of adults in the United States meet the National Institutes of Health classification of overweight or obesity.*
- South Carolina's rates of overweight and obesity are among the highest in the United States.
- Obesity rates have risen rapidly in the past five years and nearly one in five adults in South Carolina are obese (over half are overweight and obese combined).
- Approximately 65% of the adult African American population in South Carolina is overweight or obese.

Health Complications Associated with Obesity

- Obesity increases the risk for heart disease, diabetes, stroke, high blood pressure, gall bladder problems, osteoarthritis, unfavorable blood lipid levels, as well as breast and colon cancer.
- 300,000 deaths each year may be attributed to lifestyle factors of improper diet and inadequate exercise.
- Obesity costs the U.S. health care system \$51.6 billion per year in direct medical expenses, and the indirect costs (e.g. lost wages and productivity) raise the figure to \$99.2 billion.
- Obesity costs South Carolina \$177.4 million in hospital costs in 1997 and \$21.4 million of Medicaid expenses in the State could be attributed to obesity in 1998.

* Classification of obesity is commonly based on Body Mass Index (BMI) which adjusts body weight for height. A BMI of 25-29.9 is classified as overweight while a BMI of 30 or greater is considered obese.

Prevention and Management of Obesity

- Even modest weight loss (5-10% of body weight) is associated with health benefits, including improvement in blood pressure, good cholesterol (HDL), blood sugar and the need for medication.
- Nutrition: The goal of nutrition programs is to decrease calories and fat using culturally appropriate materials focused on increased awareness of fat and calorie content of food, appropriate food choices, food preparation, decreased serving sizes, and strategies for relapse prevention.
- Physical Activity: The goal of physical activity programs is to increase activity levels using lifestyle modification as well as formal exercise programs.
- Behavior Modification: The goal of behavior modification programs is to alter eating and activity patterns by changing people's attitudes, beliefs and motivation in regard to eating and physical activity.

Prevention and Management of Obesity Summary

- Achieving and maintaining appropriate weight requires good dietary patterns and adequate physical activity. Combined treatment approaches (diet, exercise, and behavior modification) are likely to produce better results than any single treatment.